

June 6, 2023
1350 Wilton Lane,
Kirkwood, MO 66122
(314) 822-2387

The Honorable Henry E. Autrey
United States District Judge
111 S. 10th Street
St Louis, MO 63102

Dear Judge Autrey,

I have been asked to write a character reference for Mr. Brian M. Kowert, 2332 Gateroyal Dr., Des Peres, MO 63131. No. 4:22-CR-175-HEA I have known Brian since September 1956. That is when I started attending Concordia Lutheran Grade School in Kirkwood, Missouri. He and I were classmates there for eight years in a class of about thirty students. Over the years the students knew each other very well.

I remember in gym class he was a much better athlete than I was. I was chubby and gawky. We were in the Boy Scouts together for a few years. I remember that neither of us were in the school choir so both of us on Wednesday afternoons after lunch, while the choir was practicing, would with others not in the choir open the envelopes and count the offerings from the morning chapel services. He was very honest in counting.

After grade school I went on to study at Kirkwood High School. I believe he went on to study at Lutheran High School South. Because of that I didn't have much contact with him in the high school years. After I graduated from high school, I went away to study at St. Paul's College in Concordia Missouri; Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Concordia Seminary in Clayton, Missouri.

I really didn't see much of him at all until I retired from the pastoral ministry in 2014 to come home and help take care of my parents who were failing. I remember in that fall, Brian had invited me to attend the small Bible Class after the 8 o'clock service at Concordia. It was an invitation I accepted.

He is one of the real movers in the class. He helps with the collection of the offering which goes to various charities. He's the person who has arranged for the teacher of the class to receive a gift at Christmas. He is very thoughtful in that way. After he retired from work, he started attending our Wednesday morning mid-week Bible study. He has been a very faithful attender of the

class. He participates in the class discussion and asks many questions of our teacher.

He's concerned about the welfare of other people. There's an elderly couple that sits in the row in front of my brother and me in church. They're not in the best shape, but they are in church almost every week. I know that Brian regularly greets them. He tries to invite them into our Bible class. This man complains that he really can't hear or see very well. Brian has tried to make an effort to help him and his wife; however, the man is very hesitant to receive help. Nevertheless, he's tried to get help for this couple in various ways.

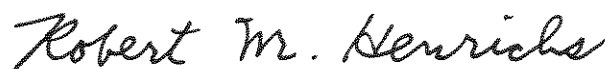
He's very knowledgeable about the Bible. He has stated that he engages in a daily reading of the Bible. His Biblical knowledge is very impressive. He cares very much about the feelings of others in the class.

In the Wednesday morning Bible class, Mr. Kowert is helping to lead our congregation's assistance of the Kirkwood's Rotary's annual fundraiser for the Fire Station. He is far better at organizing things than I am. He is the one in charge of getting members of our Wednesday men's Bible study group volunteer to work and provide the coffee at the "Carbs and Guitars Pancake Breakfast" in our local fire station.

In the Sunday Bible class where Brian is in, we have been studying the book of Genesis. We studied the doctrine of creation. Brian and I believe the same, that this world was created by Almighty God and that He made all people. All people are created in His image and are therefore the same in the eyes of God. God has given all people a soul. Therefore, no one of any race, gender, or ethnicity is to be looked down on for any reason at all. Because all people are equal, the Lord wants all people to be treated with equality and equity (fairness). The reason for that is, is because we have all been created by God. Brian is in accordance with these beliefs of Holy Scripture, which is taught in our class. These things are things that we have discussed in Bible class.

I believe that Brian M. Kowert is a man of excellent character. He appears to be a very loving and caring individual. He has a good heart. He is very active in his church where I know him the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert M. Henrichs". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a prominent 'R' and a long, sweeping 'h'.

Rev. Robert M. Henrichs